



ParentInfo

News for a child's most important educator

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Produced by the Kentucky Department of Education

Common Core is working in Kentucky schools

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Recently, Education Commissioner Terry Holliday testified before the Senate Education Committee about the Common Core State Standards in English/language arts and mathematics and the Next-Generation Science Standards, adopted in our state and collectively known as the Kentucky Core Academic Standards.

Holliday testified at a hearing on Senate Bill 224, which would abandon the standards and the work of the past four years in favor of new, yet to be written standards.

Holliday said he appreciated the chance to once again publicly address the misinformation and many of the misconceptions about the standards that those in opposition have been sharing. Among Holliday's key points were:



Terry Holliday

- Senate Bill 224 would "demoralize Kentucky educators," discarding all of their hours of work and efforts and basically tell them to start over and do it again.
- Senate Bill 224 would derail the significant improvements that Kentucky has made in increasing graduation and college readiness rates.
- Kentucky educators were able to implement new standards, assessment, accountability and professional support through redirection of state dollars and the support of numerous foundations.
- To replicate this process would require, at a minimum, \$35 million in additional state dollars.

While the committee did not vote on the bill, Holliday and the Kentucky Department of Education strongly encourage Kentucky parents to support teachers, administrators and students in the work they have already accomplished. Check out these videos featuring Kentucky teachers who speak out in favor of the Common Core State Standards.

- [Why are higher standards important for students and teachers in the classroom?](#)
- [Why do teachers need to help students meet the higher standards?](#)
- [What would you say to a critic of the common core?](#)
- [Why are assessments in the classroom important for teachers and students?](#)

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Here are other key facts to remember regarding Common Core.

Common Core better prepares your child for success.

The new standards – what your child should know and be able to do at each grade level – are aligned to college- and career-expectations so when your child graduates from high school, he or she will be ready to take the next step into a college/career and be successful.

It builds clear expectations for students, including the ability to:

- apply mathematics in real-world situations
- read and analyze both literature and informational text
- construct viable arguments and critique reasoning of others
- solve problems
- communicate effectively

Common Core is one of many changes in Kentucky public schools that when combined are designed to provide a world-class education for all students.

Rigorous standards, aligned assessments, teacher and leader effectiveness and professional learning and growth of our educators all work together to maximize student potential and ensure all students are college- and career-ready for. The system promotes:

- deeper understanding of the key concepts students need to succeed as independent thinkers
- students' ability to apply knowledge to real-world situations
- instruction that places more emphasis on understanding and application as opposed to memorization and test taking

Your child will be prepared to vie for the best jobs.

Because the standards are on par with what is being taught in other states and leading countries around the world, your child will be ready for the newest 21st-century jobs and to compete in the global economy.

The Common Core allows for local decision making.

The standards provide a framework for learning expectations; they do not dictate curriculum. The Kentucky Board of Education is responsible for establishing standards in the various content areas. Local school boards, administrators and teachers are responsible for determining how to teach the standards, including selection of instructional materials and the learning they demand.



The college- and career-readiness standard is aligned with postsecondary expectations and requires more than rote memorization for tests. Students are required to think creatively, critically, reason and solve problems – skills they must learn, and that will serve them well in the long run.

With new state tests, parents should be able to tell as early as 3rd grade if their student is on track for college/career-readiness, and if not, inquire what is being done to get them back on track.

The results of the Kentucky tests are more closely aligned to results from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), known as the nation's report card. This national assessment measures student success at a much higher level than most state tests have in the past.

This is the first step on a path of continuous improvement for districts, schools, teachers and students.

Stay the course and don't get discouraged by lower test scores. This is the right thing for kids to ensure they are ready for college/career and to compete in a global economy.

The results from K-PREP and high school End-of-Course exams are crucial to planning and progress. Our schools, districts and the state all review the data when determining how to improve.

Remember, our focus is on college/career-readiness for all students. Progress toward that goal is being made as reflected in our college/career-readiness rate.

Should you move, your child can pick up where he/she left off.

With more than 45 states implementing the Common Core, if you move, your child won't have to start over with standards based on different expectations at different grade levels leaving them vulnerable to learning gaps.

Prichard's Student Voice Team active, growing

The Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team is off to an ambitious start as the group of 25 Kentucky students has been involved in numerous events while focusing on building a solid foundation and expanding its reach.

The team has reached out to policymakers, attended hearings on measuring teacher effectiveness, facilitated roundtable discussions with other students about Kentucky's rankings on national student achievement assessments, testified before the Joint Interim Education Committee on the importance of student voice in the teacher-evaluation feedback loop, presented at a series of community events advocating for increased school funding and published an op-ed in local and national media outlets exploring the potential of incorporating student perspectives into teacher evaluations.

At the same time, the group has worked on defining its vision, goals and objectives in its pilot year. The group also led a national Twitter chat with college students who are a part of growing student voice efforts.

Student members expressed enthusiasm about their opportunity to weigh in on education issues.

"Students have the ability to be more than just beneficiaries of a strong education system, we also have the desire to be partners in making it better," said Andrew Brennen, a senior at Paul Laurence Dunbar High School (Fayette County) and the first student named as a member of the Prichard Committee last fall. "We see and hear things that the teachers, staff and administration don't. We have the unique ability to see exactly what works and what doesn't."

Rachel Belin, Prichard Committee development director who is coordinating the Student Voice Team, said that beyond building a solid foundation and ensuring the team's ongoing work, one goal is to work with existing youth-serving organizations in the state to involve more middle school and high school students in discussions about improving education.

"Ultimately, we want to move policymakers and the broader community from seeing students as passive consumers of their education to supporting them as active partners in making our schools better," Belin said.

For more information about the Student Voice Team, call Belin at (859) 233-9849, ext. 233 or e-mail studentvoiceteam@prichardcommittee.org.



Scholarship helps high school students take dual-credit classes

Kentucky high school juniors and seniors may apply for a scholarship to help pay for dual-credit classes taken at a Kentucky college or university.

The Mary Jo Young Scholarship provides assistance with tuition and textbook expenses for up to two classes each semester. Scholarships only can be used in the fall and spring semesters.

To be considered, students must be in grades 11 or 12 during the 2014-15 academic year. They must have at least an 18 ACT composite or earn at least a 2.5 GPA during the 2013-14 academic year. Priority is given to students eligible for free and reduced-price lunch.

The application is available at www.kheaa.com. Students must apply through their KHEAA account. The application period runs through May 15.

Earth Day celebration in Frankfort

First Lady Jane Beshear is collaborating with the Energy and Environment Cabinet and the Kentucky Environmental Education Council to host the 2014 Earth Day Celebration on the lawn of the Old State Capitol.

The event will be April 15 from 11 a.m. until 1 p.m. A number of state agencies and other exhibitors will have booths to educate the public about how to become better environmental stewards.

[Click here](#) for more information.



National Poetry Month

From the University Press of Kentucky blog

April is [National Poetry Month](#). Created by the Academy of American Poets, National Poetry Month celebrates all forms of poetry, whether it be written, spoken, slammed or even sung.

Publishers, libraries, schools, universities, writing groups and others come together to share and express themselves through poetry. It is a time to rejoice in our country's poetic heritage, which includes poets such as Walt Whitman, Robert Frost, Maya Angelou and Sylvia Plath. It serves as an opportunity to increase Americans' awareness of this heritage as well as their knowledge of poetry crafted today.

What are 10 ways that you can get involved with National Poetry Month? Below is an excerpt from "30 Ways to Celebrate," a list made by the Academy of American Poets. The full list can be found [here](#).

1. Take a poem out to lunch or put a poem in your lunchbox.
2. Get out the sidewalk chalk and commit a poem to pavement.
3. Leave a copy of a poem in an unexpected place.
4. Write a letter to a poet.
5. Watch a poetry-related movie.
6. Visit a poetry landmark.
7. Listen to poetry on your commute.
8. Attend a poetry reading.
9. Buy a book of poems for your local library.
10. Subscribe to a literary magazine.

Click [here](#) to read this full blog entry.

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Governor's
Commonwealth
Institute for
Parent Leadership

Four locations

- Louisville
- northern Kentucky
- eastern Kentucky
- Berea

GCIPL application deadline extended

The deadline to apply for the Governor's Commonwealth Institute for Parent Leadership has been extended to April 30. Don't miss out on this great opportunity. Click [here](#) to learn more about GCIPL and apply.

High school essay winners named at Boys Sweet 16 Tournament

Recently at the 2014 Whitaker Bank/KHSAA Boys' Sweet Sixteen State Basketball Tournament, four Kentucky high school students were recognized for winning the 25th annual Essay Contest in their respective grades:

- 12th grade – Ariel Mae Head (Muhlenberg County High School)
- 11th grade – Adrianna Burkhart (Murray High School, Murray Independent)
- 10th grade – Coire Thomas Ayres (Covington Catholic High School, private)
- 9th grade – Jumin Kim (DuPont Manual High School, Jefferson County)

This year, high school students were invited to write essays regarding the First Amendment and how elections would be affected by the absence of a free press. Entries were judged on research and understanding of voting and the First Amendment, idea development, organization, language and correctness.

Each winner received \$1,000 cash, contributed by KEA and KEA Retired, Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education, the University of Kentucky Scripps Howard First Amendment Center, the Kentucky Department of Education and ECU Center for Appalachian Regional Engagement and Stewardship. They also were recognized at center court of Rupp Arena, thanks to the Whitaker Bank/KHSAA Boys' Sweet Sixteen Basketball Tournament organizers.

Winners of the slogan contest, which is open to students in grades 6 through 8, will be announced separately.

Upcoming KASA contest

The [Kentucky Association of School Administrators](#) is sponsoring the second annual Student Art Contest and calls for student-produced artwork that explores this year's theme "I am a First Responder." Visit the website link here: <http://bit.ly/1dMgzZh>. The deadline to enter is April 24.